

4.0 AEROSPACE OPERATIONS

“Krukfang pushed the control stick forward and steered Deffblasta down into a strafing run. The words of Gobstikk came back to him, from when the Mekaniak had been teaching the young Krukfang how to fly. Long, uncontrolled bursts the clever Mek had taught him...”

“Fighta-Bommer” by Gav Thorpe, from Imperial Armour II

Most Epic armies are supported by aerial units that either operate in the atmosphere or from orbit in space. These units range from small fixed-wing aircraft with a single crewman, to gigantic spacecraft manned by thousands or even tens of thousands of crew. Aerospace units are very different to any other unit in Epic. They are very fast compared to the ground units described so far, being perfectly capable of flying onto and off the largest gaming table in a single turn. This sheer speed means that only specialised ground units or other aerospace units are capable of engaging them. In addition aerospace units often carry an arsenal of highly destructive weapons which when combined with their high speed allows them to unleash devastating attacks at almost any point on the battlefield. Last but not least, some aerospace units are capable of transporting ground units, hurtling onto the battlefield and delivering their cargo wherever they may be needed.



The rules for aerospace operations are one of the most complicated sections of the Epic rulebook. Because of this we recommend playing a few games without aerospace units before you try them out, and that you limit each side to very limited numbers of aerospace units for the first few games that you do play with the rules. Diving in the deep end and using aircraft, drop pods and spacecraft in your first game is not recommended!

4.1 AEROSPACE UNITS

In Epic there are two types of aerospace unit:

Aircraft: The unit type includes all ‘fixed wing’ aircraft that can operate in a planet’s atmosphere. Most aircraft are powered by powerful jet engines and are capable of carrying heavy payloads and of flying at thousands of kilometres and hour. Aircraft can range in size from small single-seat fighters to huge transport landers that can carry entire formations of troops. Aircraft belong to one of three manoeuvre classes that determine how easily they can turn when they move, as described below. The three classes are: *Fighters*; *Bombers*; and *Fighter-Bombers*. An aircraft’s manoeuvre class is noted instead of its speed on its data sheet.

Spacecraft: This category includes all of the interstellar space craft used by armies to move from one star system to another. These craft can vary in size from small escorts to huge battleships armed with enough firepower to level a hive city! In Epic games they are assumed to be operating from low orbit where they can land drop pods and provide long-range support for ground troops.

4.1.1 Aerospace Formations

Aerospace units are organised into formations just like any other unit. However, aerospace formations cannot be broken or suppressed. In addition they may never take part in an assault or a crossfire in any way unless they have landed (i.e. they can’t be assaulted, lend support to an assault or be used by another formation to claim a crossfire, etc., while in the air). Once landed an aerospace unit may be assaulted and be used in a crossfire, and is effected by blast markers normally.





4.2 AIRCRAFT

Aircraft formations are not set-up with other units. They are kept off table (where it can be imagined they are 'in orbit' or stationed at a nearby airbase) but can be set up on the board when they take an action. Aircraft that are capable of transporting other units may be set up with these units already on board. The aircraft (plus any units they are transporting) may only enter play using the following rules.



Aircraft formations can only take the following actions: Interception, Ground Attack, Combat Air Patrol or Hold. These are described below:

Interception: Only fighters and fighter-bombers can choose this action. Take an action test for the formation and if it passes set up the formation touching your table edge. The formation may then make an approach move and then attack enemy aircraft units. In the End Phase the formation must make a disengagement move and exit the table.

Ground Attack: Take an action test for the formation and if it passes set up the formation touching your table edge. The formation may then make an approach move and then attack enemy ground units. In the End Phase the formation must make a disengagement move and exit the table.

Combat Air Patrol (CAP): Only fighters and fighter-bombers can choose this action. Take an action test for the formation and if it passes set up the formation touching your own side's table edge to show where it will enter play.

A formation on combat air patrol may choose to carry out an interception action in reaction to an enemy ground attack. No initiative test is required to carry out the interception. It takes place after the enemy ground attack formation has made its approach move, but before flak is fired at the ground attackers or they make their own attack.

No more than one formation that is on CAP may intercept a formation that makes a ground attack mission. In effect CAP allows you to interrupt an enemy ground attack action and 'bounce' the enemy aircraft before they make their attack. The interception follows the normal rules, effectively being an 'action within an action'. After the interception has been carried out play returns to the ground attack action.

Hold: An aircraft formation that fails its action test must choose to take a hold action. The formation may do nothing this turn.

4.2.1 Aircraft Approach Moves

Aircraft carrying out an Interception or Ground Attack action are set up touching their own side's table edge (choose an edge randomly if your side doesn't have a table edge in the scenario being played). After the formation is set up it carries out an approach move.

Aircraft making an approach move may travel an unlimited distance over the table tabletop when they move. Aircraft are assumed to be travelling high enough above the ground to fly over terrain, ZOCs and other units (in other words they ignore all three things!) By the same token other units may ignore aircraft and aircraft zones of control when they move. Note that aircraft may not assault other units.

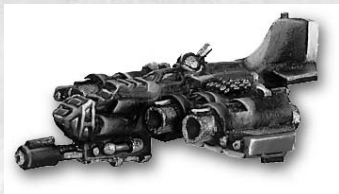
Aircraft must generally travel straight ahead in the direction they are facing, and can only change direction by *turning*. Aircraft belong to one of three manoeuvre classes that determine how easily they can turn when they move, as described below. The three classes are: Fighters; Bombers; and Fighter-Bombers. An aircraft's manoeuvre class is noted instead of its speed on its data sheet.

Fighters: Fighters may make one 90 degree turn after moving at least 30cm. Once the fighter has made a turn it must move another 30cm before it can turn again.



Imperial Thunderbolt Fighter

Bombers: Bombers may make one 45 degree turn after moving at least 30cm. Once the bomber has made a turn it must move another 30cm before it can turn again.



Imperial Marauder Bomber

Fighter-Bombers: Fighter-bombers manoeuvre as bombers when making an approach move if they are carrying out a ground attack action (because they are laden down with bombs or rockits), and like fighters under any other circumstances.



Ork Fighta-Bomma

4.2.2 Aircraft Attacks

After aircraft have made their approach move they are allowed to attack. Aircraft carrying out a ground attack action may attack an enemy ground formation. Aircraft carrying out an interception mission may attack an enemy aircraft formation. Aircraft are assumed to be flying high enough in the air to ignore any terrain that might block the line of sight when they shoot at any targets, and the crossfire rule does not apply to aircraft attacks. This aside resolve the attack using the normal shooting rules.

After the aircraft formation has made an attack it's action is over. It remains in play until the end phase, at which time it must make a disengagement move and exit the table (see 4.2.6).

4.2.3 Anti-Aircraft Attacks

Some weapons have an anti-aircraft value (AA) that can be used to attack aircraft, and only aircraft. Aircraft can shoot at other aircraft either when making a flak attack (see 4.2.4) or when attacking as part of an interception action. Ground units may *only* shoot at aircraft when making a flak attack, and may *not* choose to shoot at aircraft formations as part of one of their actions (this rule stops ground units 'rushing over' to attack aircraft before they can disengage).

Roll to hit using the weapon's AA value. If a hit is scored then the aircraft must make a saving roll to see if it is destroyed. The crossfire rule does not apply to aircraft.

Fighters and fighter-bombers can choose to jink when they have to make a saving throw. Jinking represents the pilot desperately swerving his plane to one side in order to try and dodge the enemy attack. All of the aircraft in a formation must jink, or none at all. Aircraft that jink receive a 4+ saving throw instead of their normal armour save but lose their attack if they have not already taken it (they are concentrating on dodging enemy bullets). Place a suitable marker on the aircraft as a reminder it can't shoot.

4.2.4 Flak Attacks

AA weapons are designed to fire defensively against an attacking enemy aircraft, and may therefore shoot immediately after an enemy aircraft formation makes an approach move but before it makes its attack. This is called a *flak attack*. Note that aircraft carrying out a ground attack mission that are armed with AA weapons may shoot at enemy interceptors that fall within the AA weapons fire arc. Making a flak attack does not remove overwatch status from a ground formation.

Flak attacks may not be carried out by units belonging to a formation that is marching or broken. This aside, flak attacks are a 'free' or bonus attack, and making a flak attack does not stop the unit attacking again later in the same turn. What's more, a flak weapon can make any number of flak attacks per turn against different aircraft formations, as long as it does not attack the same aircraft formation more than once in a turn.

No line of fire is required when firing at aircraft, as it is assumed that they are high enough above any terrain features to be seen by all units. Make flak attacks one unit at a time, in any order you like.



Ground units that are armed with AA weapons can shoot at enemy aircraft as they move past them. To represent this they may shoot at an aircraft formation that moved within their weapon range during their approach or disengagement move, even if the aircraft is no longer within weapon range when the attack is made. Attacks made against disengaging aircraft are resolved when the aircraft reaches the edge of the table, before it is removed to 'fly back to base'. Units that shot at an aircraft formation as it approached may not shoot at them again as they disengage.

4.2.5 Transporting Ground Units

Aircraft with a transport capacity are known as transport aircraft and are allowed to pick up and drop off ground units. Troops being transported are kept off-board embarked on the transport aircraft until it is deployed. Any units that are picked up and transported off the table may later return to play in the same transport aircraft.

An aircraft must carry out a ground attack action in order to transport units. Transport aircraft are treated in the same manner as war engine transport vehicles, and are only allowed to transport units from another formation as long as the whole formation can fit inside the transport aircraft (see 3.1.2). If a transport aircraft is destroyed while carrying ground units, then any transported troops are lost with it (no saves in this case!)

Transport aircraft can pick up and drop off their cargo in two ways; by landing or making an air assault:

Landing: Aircraft with a transport capability can land after making their approach move and having being fired upon by any enemy flak. If the aircraft lands in dangerous terrain it must take a dangerous terrain test. After the aircraft has landed any units being transported may disembark and are placed within 5cms of the transport

aircraft (skimmers and units with jump packs can be placed within 15cms, to represent them dropping from the aircraft as it comes in to land!). Alternatively the aircraft may pick up any friendly units within 5cms, assuming they will fit on board of course. After embarking or disembarking any units the aircraft may carry out its ground attack. Note that the limitations that apply to units disembarking from a war engine transport vehicle also apply to units disembarking from an aircraft (i.e. they can't take an action on the turn they disembark but can shoot with the aircraft – see 3.1.2)

Once landed the aircraft is treated in all ways as a ground unit with a speed of zero (i.e. it may not move!) It may not carry out an action on the turn it lands. If it is involved in an assault and loses then it is automatically destroyed. Once landed the aircraft may make a disengagement move and exit the table in the End Phase of any turn, including the one where it landed.

Air Assault: Transport aircraft may choose to land as described above and then it and any units that disembark are allowed to fight an assault instead of shooting. The aircraft and any units that disembark are treated as a single formation for the duration of the assault, in the same manner as units disembarking from a war engine taking an engage action (see 3.1.2). If the aircraft loses the assault it is destroyed, but any units that have disembarked may withdraw normally

4.2.6 Disengagement Moves

In the End Phase all aircraft that have not landed must exit the table. Aircraft that have landed may exit the table. Aircraft may exit along ANY table edge. Simply move the aircraft as you did when it made its approach move, until it reaches a table edge. This is called the disengagement move, and it takes place at the start of the end phase before any ground formations rally.

4.2.7 Blast Markers

Aircraft collect blast markers in a similar manner to other units, but are effected by them rather differently. The following fairly simple rules reflect the time it takes to re-arm and refuel aircraft after a mission. Aircraft in a formation that has come under heavy attack and therefore have a lot of blast markers will take longer to get ready, and so there is an increased chance that they may not get to carry out a mission.

Aircraft formations collect Blast markers under the following circumstances:

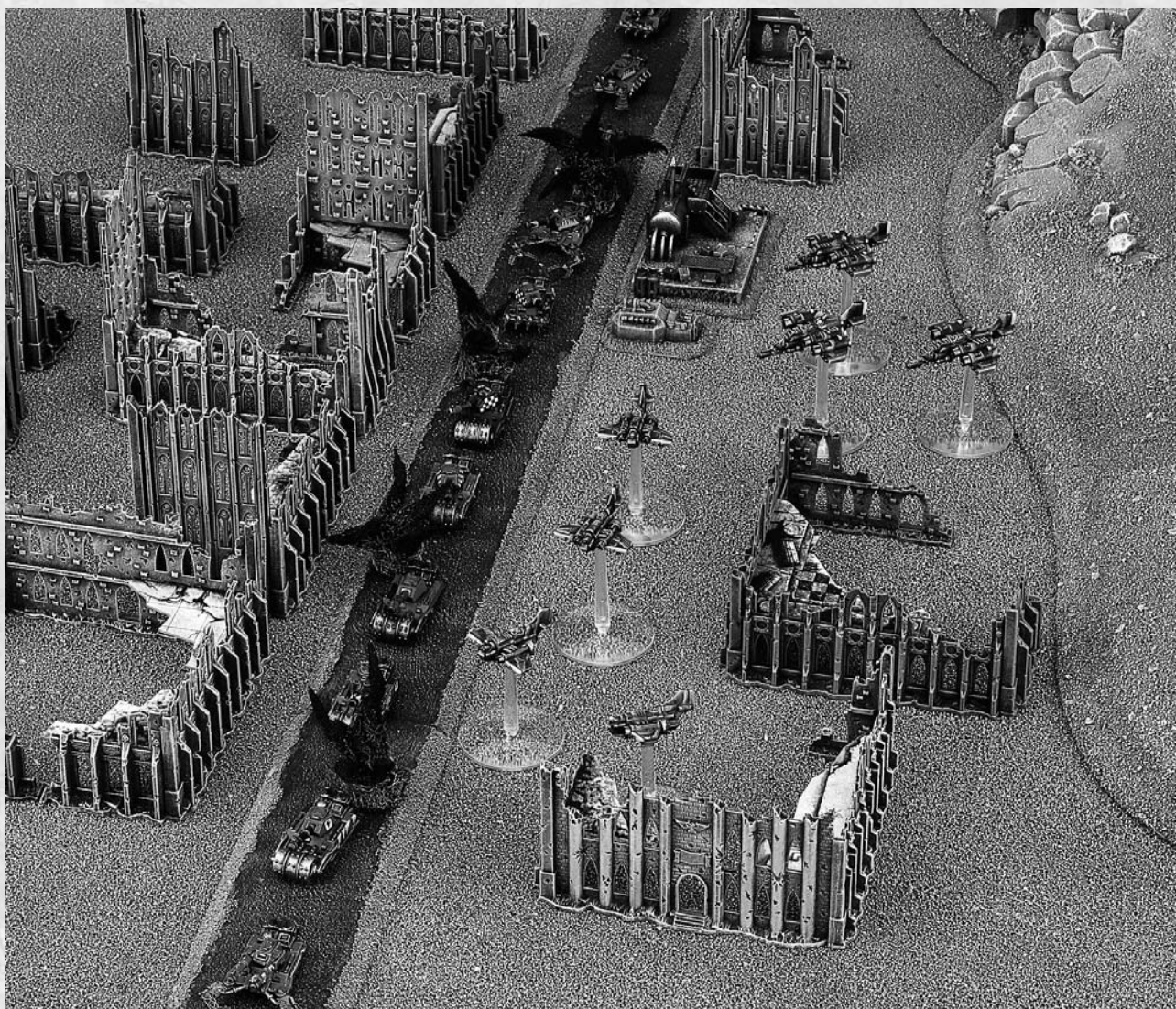
- Any aircraft formation that suffers any flak attacks receives one blast marker for 'coming under fire'. The formation can only receive one blast marker during the approach move and another blast marker during the disengagement move, no matter how many different units from however many different formations attack it.
- The aircraft receives one blast marker for each aircraft unit that is shot down or point of damage that is suffered if it is a war engine.

- The aircraft receives an extra blast marker if it exits from any table edge other than its own table edge, to represent the possibility of it being attack while flying back over enemy territory.

Aircraft are not suppressed or broken by blast markers, but are not allowed to rally in the end phase either. Instead the next time that you want to take an action with the formation, take the action test as before, but apply a -1 modifier for each blast marker on the formation (this modifier replaces the modifier for having one or more blast markers).

All of the blast markers are removed from the formation immediately after it takes the action test, whether it passes the test or not. If it passes the test it may carry out an action, and if it fails it may not.

Aircraft that land are effected by any blast makers they have picked up normally, and are allowed to rally in the end phase. Any additional blast markers they pick up will be 'carried off' with them if they later take off again.



4.3 SPACECRAFT

Most armies have access to spacecraft that can be used to land ballistic entry vehicles and unleash potentially devastating orbital attacks. Each type of spacecraft an army can use has its own datasheet with details of the drop pods and weapons carried by the spacecraft.

The Spacecraft of the 41st millennium are huge. Even a small Imperial Cruiser would be over 5 meters long if we made an Epic scale model of it. Because neither side is allowed to include more than one spacecraft in their army.

4.3.1 Planning Spacecraft Operations

In order to carry out spacecraft operations you will need a Battlefleet Gothic model representing the orbiting spacecraft.

Spacecraft operations must be planned well in advance, and because of this any spacecraft models must be set up right at the start of the battle, before any ground units are deployed. If both players have spacecraft they should take turns in setting them up, starting with the player with the higher strategy rating.

Spacecraft are set up touching their own side's table edge (choose an edge randomly if your side doesn't have a table edge in the scenario being played), facing in any direction. As each spacecraft is set up the player must declare out load on which turn the ship will arrive. Note that the turn the spacecraft will arrive is not a secret – they are far too large to sneak up on the enemy! You may choose any turn, from the first turn onwards. However, you may not choose a turn that has already been taken by another spacecraft, and no more than one spacecraft can travel over the battlefield on the same turn.

In addition to saying when the spacecraft will arrive out, you must secretly record where any orbital bombardments will fall. Each player needs to do this in turn while the other player is not looking. Simply write down on a piece of paper the co-ordinates of the attack from the position of the space craft model. For example you might write "60cm up, 30cm right". This would mean that the attack would land 60cm up from the space craft model and 30cm to the right of it. The co-ordinates you plot will determine the centre point of any orbital barrage your spacecraft fires.

4.3.2 Carrying Out The Operation

Spacecraft operations take place in the action phase of the turn state. Simply take an action test for the spacecraft as you would for any other formation. If the test is passed, the spacecraft may make orbital bombardments, pin-point attacks, or carry out a planetfall as described below (see 4.3.3, 4.3.4 & 4.4). After any attacks or landings have taken place the spacecraft model is removed. If the test is failed then the spacecraft has been delayed and fails to arrive this turn; you may roll for it again next turn as long as no other spacecraft are scheduled to arrive that turn. If the next turn has been taken, then the delayed spacecraft will arrive in the first available free turn.

4.3.3 Orbital Bombardments

If a spacecraft can carry out an orbital bombardment this will be noted on its datasheet.

Orbital bombardments cover an area considerably larger than an artillery bombardment, and so require a barrage template that is twice the size (i.e. 12cm across). By a remarkable stroke of good fortune this happens to be the same size as the Ordnance template used in Warhammer 40,000, and if you happen to have three of these we recommend you use them (I know, it's almost like we planned it, isn't it!) If not then make your own templates from card or acetate.

Take one of the templates and place it with its centre at the co-ordinates you recorded at the start of the battle. Place the other two templates so they are touching the first one, and with none of the templates overlapping each other. Not that you don't need to pass a second initiative test in order to carry out the bombardment – the one you passed earlier on allows the bombardment to take place.

Once the position of the orbital bombardment is known, attack any units under the templates just as you would for an artillery barrage (see barrages above). Orbital bombardments never benefit from the crossfire rule.

4.3.4 Pin-Point Attacks

Pin-point attacks may be made on enemy war engines (war engines are the only things big enough for a spacecraft to pick out on the battlefield). Pick a target anywhere on the table and then attack it with any pin-point attacks the spacecraft may have. You may target different war engines with each pin-point attack if you wish, or concentrate all of the attacks on a single target. Note that you do not need to record the co-ordinates of pin-point attacks.

4.4 PLANETFALL

Some armies are allowed to land ground units from orbiting spacecraft in specially modified vehicles. These vehicles are mainly used to carry troops from orbiting spacecraft to the planet below. Most are more like manned missiles than aircraft, and are designed to be fired at extremely high speeds into the planet's atmosphere. At the last moment powerful jets slow the descent of the vehicle allowing it and its cargo to land safely on the planet's surface. The high speeds that the vehicles travel at makes it almost impossible for weapons to engage them before they have landed. This is known as making a planetfall.

Any unit capable of making a planetfall will have this noted on its datasheet. The datasheets for a spacecraft will note the type and number of units it may carry that can make planetfall. It is assumed that a spacecraft can also carry any cargo that will be transported in the unit if it has a transport capacity. Units entering play by planetfall and their cargo (if any) should be kept off the table until landed.

You can make a planetfall on the turn the spacecraft transporting the units enters play. Carry out the planetfall after carrying out any bombardments or pin-point attacks. Take one of the units with the planetfall ability and place it anywhere on the table. If the unit is part of a formation then its initial landing point must be within 5cm of a unit from the same formation that has already landed. The

unit then scatters 2D6cms in a random direction (we recommend using a Games Workshop scatter dice to determine the direction, but any mutually agreeable method will do). Immediately after being placed on the table you may disembark any units on board the vehicle within 5cms of it.

Carrying on doing this until all of the units with the planetfall ability that are on the spacecraft have landed. Units that end up out of formation due to scattering as they land must move back into a legal formation when they next take an action (see 1.6.1)

Units entering play by planetfall are destroyed if they land off the table. If the unit lands on terrain that is impassable or dangerous for it, or on top of any sort of unit (friend or foe), or in an enemy zone of control, then it is assumed that on-board automatic guidance systems will divert it towards a safe landing point and the unit is moved by the opposing player to the nearest area of clear ground where it can land.

Formations that land by planetfall, or that are transported to the surface in units making a planetfall, can take an action later in the same action phase. In effect the units land from the spacecraft when the spacecraft takes its action, and can take an action of their own later in the same turn. Remember that any formations that have landed by planetfall and scattered out of formation must move back into a legal formation when they take an action.

4.5 AEROSPACE TRAINING SCENARIOS

"Today had been a good day for Krukfang; plenty of firing, plenty of speed."

The rules for aerospace operations, like the war engine rules that preceded them, are fairly long and complex, and for this reason it is best to learn how to use them by playing the following training scenarios before you use them in full-sized games. The training scenarios concentrate on the aircraft rules exclusively, as these are both the most complex and the most commonly used.

4.5.1 Death From The Skies!

In the sulphur-yellow skies above Armageddon Ork fighta-bombers battle with Imperial Navy Thunderbolts and Marauders in deadly dance of death.

Typical of these engagements was the Ork aerial attack on Imperial Command Bunker Complex 17c, home to the Headquarters of the Imperial Guard 2nd Asgardian Rangers regiment. More than half a dozen Ork fighta-bombers from Harthag's Deffblasta's Flyboyz Squadron attacked the complex, and were intercepted by elements the Imperial Navy's 222nd Interceptor Strike Wing. The air combat that unfolded is considered by many to be one of the classic aerial engagements of the Armageddon Wars.

Ork Forces: Two formations each consisting of four Ork Fighta-Bommerz. The force has a strategy rating of 3 and all formations have an initiative value of 3+.

Imperial Forces: One formation consisting of three Imperial Navy Thunderbolt Fighters, plus two formations each consisting of one Command Bunker and one Hydra AA vehicle, and one formation consisting of three Basilisk artillery vehicles and one Hydra. The force has a strategy rating of 2 and all formations have an initiative value of 2+.

Gaming Area: Set up a playing area approximately 90-120cm square. Set up any scenery you have in a mutually agreeable manner. You can set up as much or as little scenery as you like, but try to make sure that you have at least a couple of hills and either a built-up area or some woods for the troops to hide behind or take cover in.

Deployment: The Imperial player sets up first, and must set up all of the ground formations in his force anywhere he likes on the table. Both sides aircraft are off the table at the start of the battle.

Special Rules : See section 3.4 for *Power of the Waaagh!*

Victory Conditions: The Ork player has three turns in which to destroy both Command Bunkers and all three Basilisks. If he succeeds he wins, if not the Imperial player wins.

4.5.2 Thunderhawk Down

Acheron Hive fell without warning on the fifth day of the invasion of Armageddon, the victim of treachery by none other than ex-Imperial Governor Herman von Strab. Intelligence reports indicated that von Strab was located in a captured command bunker just outside the hive city. A small force of Terminators from the Salamanders chapter were despatched in a Thunderhawk Gunship in a bid to capture the traitor.

The Terminators were teleported just outside the bunkers and quickly overran the complex, but found that von Strab had already left. Things started to go wrong when Ork Fighta-Bombers ambushed the Thunderhawk sent to evacuate the Terminators. Only the Thunderhawk's legendarily sturdy construction and the timely assistance of some Imperial Navy Thunderbolt fighters allowed it to survive and pick up the Terminators. When the Thunderhawk returned to base only one engine was still functioning, all of its crew had either been wounded or killed, and bullet holes caused by over 250 big shoota shell hits were counted on its hull. All of the Terminators sent on the mission were evacuated safely.

Imperial Forces: One Thunderhawk Gunship, plus one formation consisting of four Space Marine Terminator units, and one formation consisting of three Imperial Navy Thunderbolt fighters. The force has a strategy rating of 5. All Space Marine formations have an initiative value of 1+, and the Thunderbolts have an initiative value of 2+.

Ork Forces: Two formations each consisting of three Ork Fighta-Bommerz, and two formations each consisting of one Command Bunker's and one (traitor) Imperial Guard Hydra AA vehicle. The force has a strategy rating of 2. Traitor Guard formations have an initiative value of 2+, and the Ork Fighta-Bommerz have an initiative value of 3+.

Gaming Area: Same as 4.5.1

Deployment: The Ork player sets up first, and must set up all of the ground formations in his force anywhere he likes on the table. All remaining formations are off the table at the start of the battle. The Space Marine player may teleport the Terminators into battle if he wishes too (see 2.1.17).

Special Rules : See section 3.4 for *Power of the Waaagh!* and section 1.15 for *"They Shall Know No Fear"*.

Victory Conditions: The Imperial player wins if he destroys both bunkers with close combat attacks, and then manages to exit at least one Terminator unit off the table in a Thunderhawk Gunship. The Imperial player gets a draw if he destroys both bunkers. Any other result is a win for the Ork player.

COMMAND BUNKER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	Immobile	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Bolters	(15cms)	n/a	Small Arms	

Notes: No units may enter the bunker - it is off limits!.

SPACE MARINE TERMINATORS

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4 +	3 +	3 +
Weapon		Range	Firepower	
Storm Bolters		(15cms)	Small Arms	
Power Weapons		(base contact)	Assault Weapons, macro-weapon	
2 x Assault Cannon		30cm	AP5+/AT 5+	



Notes: *Reinforced Armour. Thick rear armour.* Terminators can be teleported onto the battlefield. Simply place the formation anywhere you like on the table at the start of any turn, before determining who wins the strategy roll. All units must be placed outside enemy zones of control. If placed in dangerous terrain then a dangerous terrain test must be taken when the unit is placed on the table.

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